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LEIGH HUNT'S RELATIONS WITH BYRON, SHELLEY AND KEATS, by Barnette Miller, Ph.D. New York. The Columbia University Press. (The MacMillan Company.) 1910. \$1.25, Pp. 169.

As a center from which radiated influences of many kinds Leigh Hunt needs no introduction to students of English literature. Before there arose the true prophet of culture, he purveyed much sweetness and light of a somewhat Philistine variety. The circumference of his circle has never been properly plotted, although everyone knows that his friendships constitute one of his chief titles to fame. These friendships, to be sure, did not always run smooth. His personal relations with Shelley best deserve, perhaps, reverent commemoration, but his influence upon literature was strongest in the case of Keats. Moreover, if Keats, as has been said, is the father of Tennyson, then Hunt, in spite of his many infirmities, must be regarded as the ancestor of an illustrious line.

To trace this ancestry through its many ramifications, much attention must be given to the details of style. For this reason we regret that Dr. Miller has not given more space to an analysis of Cockney rhetoric. The word-lists that she furnishes are short, and no adequate account is given of the independent influence of Spenserian style in the case in which Spenser's influence was most potent. Some such account is necessary if we are to appreciate the degree to which Hunt's standards of style and taste affected Keats. It is somewhat tantalizing to be told simply that "Keats used peculiar words with so much greater felicity and in so much greater profusion than Hunt. . . . that one is forced to believe that Spenser's influence rather than Hunt's was dominant here" (p. 61). And further on the same page, speaking of "ordinary words used peculiarly," the writer says only that "these devices likewise cannot be credited to Hunt without reservation, since both Spenser and Milton used them." This lack of precision and fullness is very unfortunate, because one of the clearest questions raised by Dr. Miller's thesis is how far Hunt in affecting contemporary's standards of literary composition was simply emphasizing already strong influences.

In its biographical and historical as apart from its more purely stylistic interest, Dr. Miller's monograph seems to us highly creditable. By ample quotations and judicious comment she has reconstructed a period of conflict to which the histories of literature have done scant justice. In these days of temperate criticism it seems incredible that Hunt's suburban tea-cup cheer and insipid prettinesses should have provoked to wrath such worthy journals as the *Quarterly* and *Blackwood's*; and that a

number of the prominent litterateurs of the day should have stooped to billingsgate unexcelled in any previous school of abuse. This is, of course, largely because we have nowadays divorced politics and literature. The conditions in the early nineteenth century were wholly different; and it is partly because Dr. Miller has made clear this difference and has interpreted the political implications and prepossessions of the literature of Hunt's time that we congratulate her upon her work. But she has done much more than this. She has given us sketches of character and interpretations of conduct that seem to us excellent in their sanity. This will not appear to be an inconsiderable achievement to those who remember the ethical complex presented by the biographies of Byron and of Shelley.

In the main we may say that Dr. Miller's dissertation is of a kind of which we have many examples from the Columbia University Press. It seeks not so much to break new ground, to precipitate or enter controversy, as to survey minutely a territory whose limits and main character are known. It cannot be said that Dr. Miller has discovered anything in particular. On the other hand, she has put together more or less easily accessible data in such helpful form, she has exercised in most cases such excellent judgment, she has in general made her work so vitally interesting that her monograph will be of high value to students of nineteenth century literature.

We have noted the following misprints: Grude for grudge (p. 35), entomological for etymological (p. 81), Hazlett for Hazlitt (p. 129), ever for even (p. 138), erottic for erotic (p. 141). On page 119 the text and a continuation of a note from the preceding page are run together.

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THE HISTORICAL STUDY OF THE MOTHER TONGUE,
AN INTRODUCTION TO PHILOLOGICAL METHOD.

By Henry Cecil Wyld, Saines Professor of the English Language and Philology in the University of Liverpool. New York: E. P. Dutton & Co. 1906. 8vo, pp. ix, 412. \$2.00 net.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF STANDARD ENGLISH
SPEECH IN OUTLINE. By J. M. Hart. New York:
Henry Holt & Co. 1907. Small 8vo, pp. vii, 93. \$1.00 net.

In connection with the present day activity in the direction of spelling reform there should be an increased interest in the sound changes in the history of English, which, since they are responsible for the unphonetic character of English orthography,